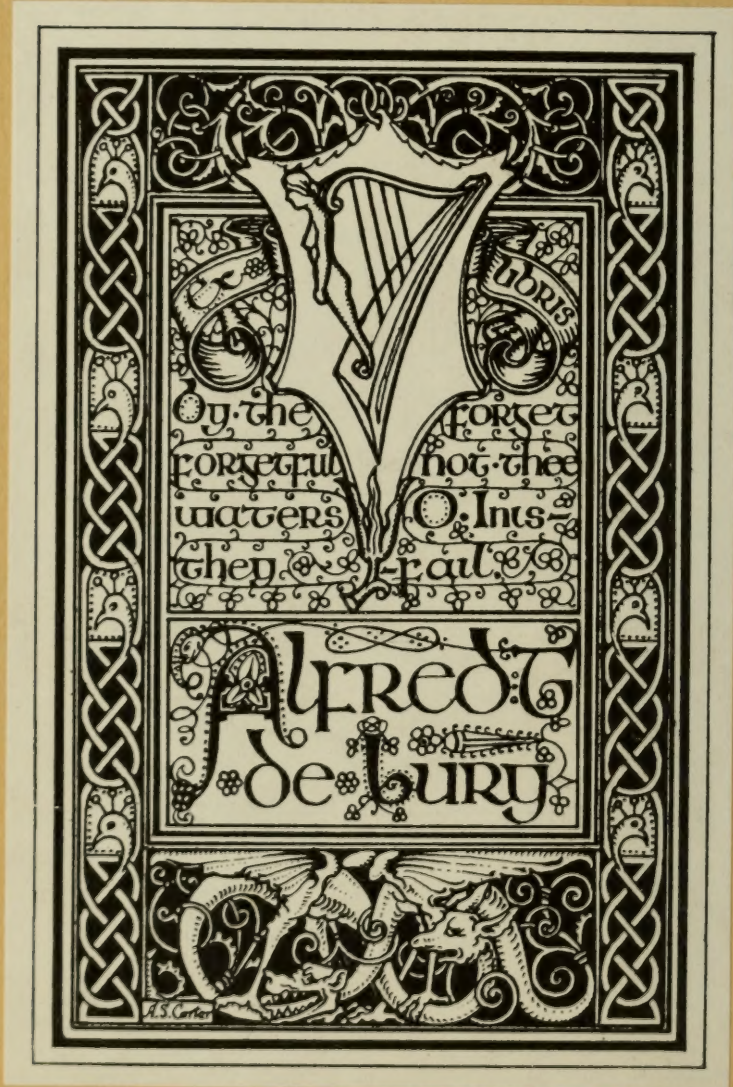




3 1761 07040787 9

TWELVE POEMS BY J. C. SQUIRE

H&SS
A
4635

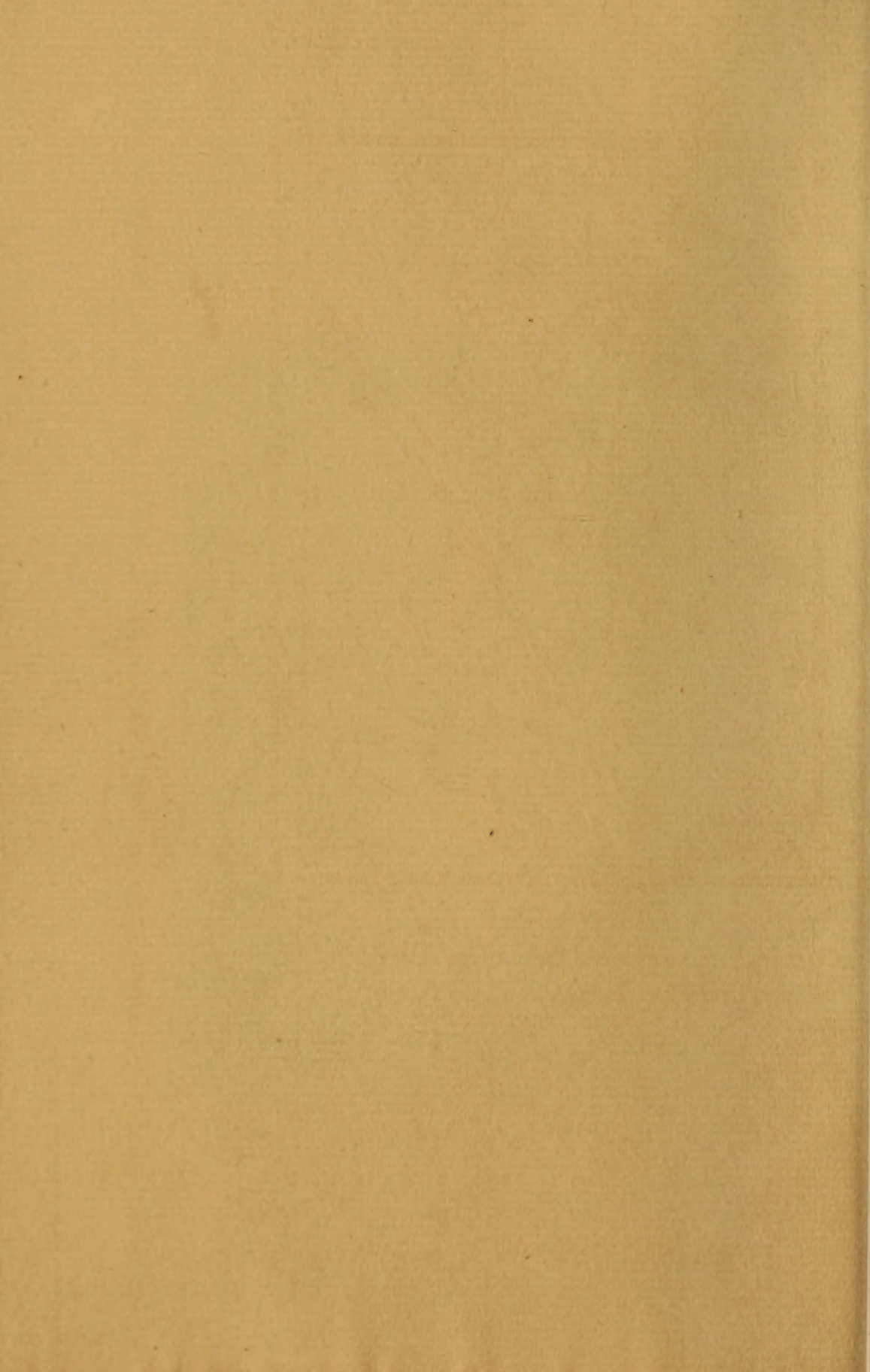


By the
FORGETFUL
waters
they
FORGET
NOT THEE
O. IN
THY FAULT

ALFRED THE
GREAT



125



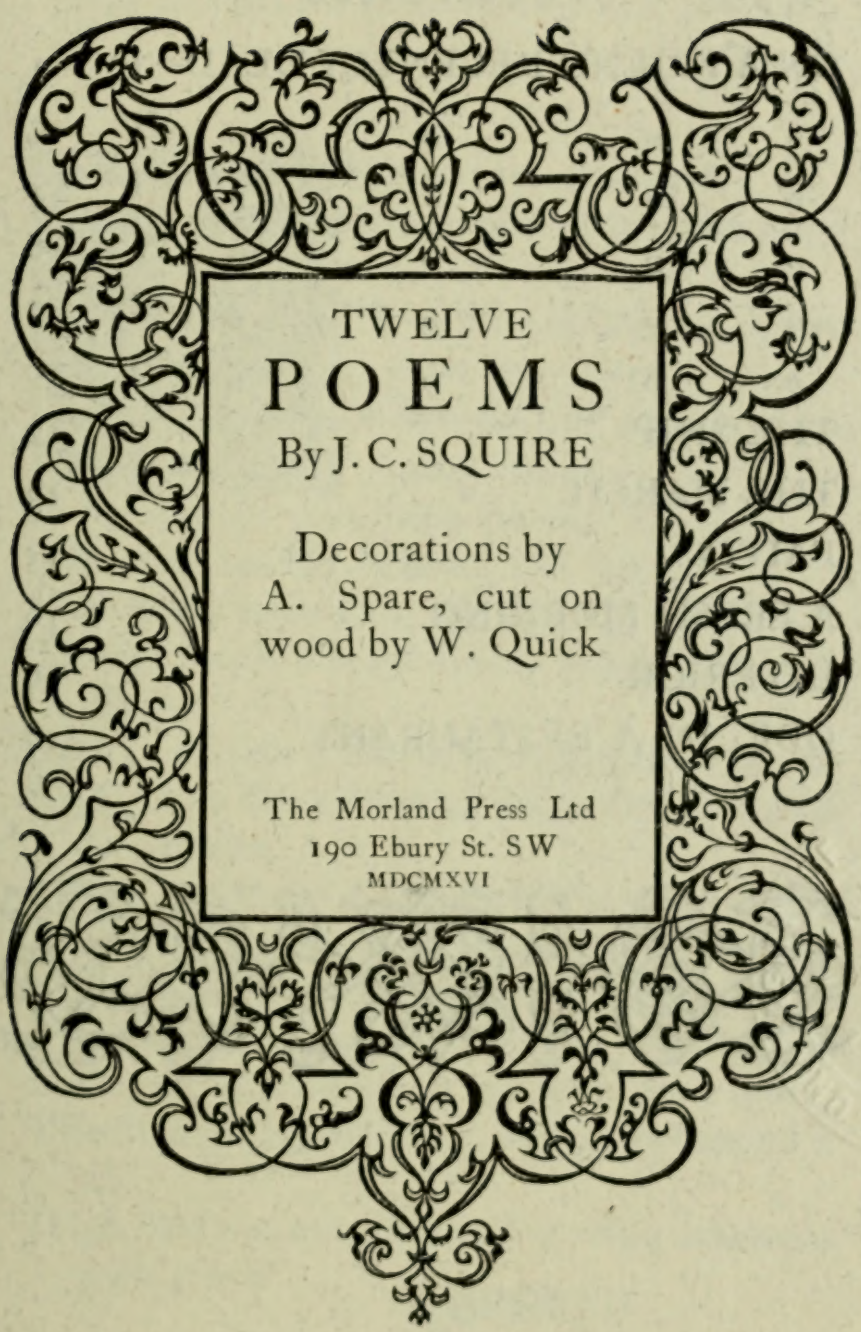


PUBLISHED FOR "FORM"
BY THE MORLAND PRESS
190 Ebury Street London SW
MDCMXVI

ERRATA

Page 8 line 15: for 'fade' read 'faded'


Page 18 line 4: for 'strings' read 'stings'



TWELVE
POEMS
By J. C. SQUIRE

Decorations by
A. Spare, cut on
wood by W. Quick

The Morland Press Ltd
190 Ebury St. SW
MDCMXVI



CONTENTS

ON A FRIEND RECENTLY DEAD	I	1
” ” ” ”	II	3
” ” ” ”	III	4
” ” ” ”	IV	6
” ” ” ”	V	7
” ” ” ”	VI	10
THE SHIP		12
THE MARCH		13
FAITH		15
A FRESH MORNING		16
INTERIOR		16
ODE: IN A RESTAURANT		17



649985

24. 1. 57

ON A FRIEND RECENTLY DEAD

I



HE stream goes fast.
When this that is the present
is the past,
'T will be as all the other
pasts have been,
A failing hill, a daily dimming
scene,

A far strange port with foreign life astir
The ship has left behind, the voyager
Will never return to; no, nor see again,
Though with a heart full of longing he may
strain

Back to project himself, and once more count
The boats, the whitened walls that climbed
the mount,

Mark the cathedral's roof, the gathered spires,
The vanes, the windows red with sunset's fires,
The gap of the market-place, and watch again
The coloured groups of women, and the men
Lounging at ease along the low stone wall
That fringed the harbour; and there beyond it
all

High pastures morning and evening scattered
with small

Specks that were grazing sheep It is all
gone,
It is all blurred that once so brightly shone;
He cannot now with the old clearness see
The rust upon one ringbolt of the quay.

II



ND yesterday is dead, and
you are dead.

Your duplicate that hovered
in my head

Thins like blown wreathing
smoke, your features
grow

To interrupted outlines, and all will go
Unless I fight dispersal with my will . . .
So I shall do it . . . but too conscious still
That, when we walked together, had I known
How soon your journey was to end alone,
I should not now, that you have gone from
view

Be gathering derelict odds and ends of you;
But in the intense lucidity of pain
Your likeness would have burnt into my brain.
I did not know; lovable and unique,
As volatile as a bubble and as weak,
You sat with me, and my eyes registered
This thing and that, and sluggishly I heard
Your voice, remembering here and there a
word.

III



O in my mind there's not
much left of you,
And that disintegrates;
but while a few
Patches of memory's
mirror still are bright
Nor your reflected image

there has quite

Faded and slipped away, it will be well
To search for each surviving syllable
Of voice and body and soul. And some I'll find
Right to my hand, and some tangled and blind
Among the obscure weeds that fill the mind.

A pause

I plunge my thought's hooked resolute claws
Deep in the turbid past. Like drowned things
in the jaws

Of grappling-irons, your features to the verge
Of conscious knowledge one by one emerge.

Can I not make these scattered things unite? . . .

I knit my brows and clench my eyelids tight
And focus to a point . . . Streams of dark
pinkish light

Convolve; and now spasmodically there flit
Clear pictures of you as you used to sit:—

The way you crossed your legs stretched in
your chair,

Elbow at rest and tumbler in the air,
Jesting on books and politics and worse,
And still good company when most perverse.
Capricious friend!

Here in this room not long before the end,
Here in this very room six months ago
You poised your foot and joked and chuckled
so.

Beyond the window shook the ash-tree bough,
You saw books, pictures, as I see them now,
The sofa then was blue, the telephone
Listened upon the desk, and softly shone
Even as now the fire-irons in the grate,
And the little brass pendulum swung, a seal
of fate

Stamping the minutes; and the curtains on
window and door

Just moved in the air; and on the dark boards
of the floor

These same discreetly-coloured rugs were
lying . . .

And then you never had a thought of dying.

IV



YOU are not here, and all
 the things in the room
 Watch me alone in the
 gradual growing gloom.
 The you that thought and
 felt are I know not
 where,
 The you that sat and

drank in that arm-chair

Will never sit there again.

For months you have lain

Under a graveyard's green

In some place abroad where I've never
 never been.

Perhaps there is a stone over you,

Or only the wood and the earth and the
 grass cover you.

But it doesn't much matter; for dead and
 decayed you lie

Like a million million others who felt they
 would never die,

Like Alexander and Helen the beautiful,

And the last collier hanged for murdering his
 trull ;

All done with and buried in an equal bed.

V.



ES, you are dead like all
the other dead.

You are not here, but I
am here alone.

And evening falls, fusing
tree, water and stone

Into a violet cloth, and

the frail ash-tree hisses

With a soft sharpness like a fall of mounded
grain.

And a steamer softly puffing along the river
passes,

Drawing a file of barges; and silence falls
again.

And a bell tones; and the evening darkens;
and in sparse rank

The greenish lights well out along the other
bank.

I have no force left now; the sights and
sounds impinge.

Upon me unresisted, like raindrops on the
mould.

And striving not against my melancholy
mood,

Limp as a door that hangs upon one failing
hinge,

Limp, with slack marrowless arms and thighs,
I sit and brood
On death and death and death. And quiet,
thin and cold,
Following of this one friend the hopeless
helpless ghost,
The weak appealing wraiths of notable men
of old
Who died, pass through the air; and then,
host after host,
Innumerable, overwhelming, without form,
Rolling across the sky in awful silent storm,
The myriads of the undifferentiated dead
Whom none recorded, or of whom the record
fade.



spectacle appallingly sublime!
I see the universe one long dis-
astrous strife,
And in the staggering abysses
of backward and forward time
Death chasing hard upon the
heels of creating life.
And I, I see myself as one of a heap of stones
Wetted a moment to life as the flying wave
goes over,
Onward and never returning, leaving no mark
behind.

There's nothing to hope for. Blank cessation
numbs my mind,
And I feel my heart thumping gloomy against
its cover,
My heavy belly hanging from my bones.

VI



ELOW in the dark street
 There is a tap of feet,
 I rise and angrily meditate
 How often I have let of
 late
 This thought of death
 come over me.

How often I will sit and backward trace
 The deathly history of the human race,
 The ripples of men who chattered and were still,
 Known and unknown, older and older, until
 Before man's birth I fall, shivering and aghast
 Through a hole in the bottom of the remotest
 past;

 Till painfully my spirit throws
 Her giddiness off; and then as soon
 As I recover and try to think again,
 Life seems like death; and all my body grows
 Icily cold, and all my brain
 Cold as the jagged craters of the moon. . . .
 And I wonder is it not strange that I
 Who thus have heard eternity's black laugh
 And felt its freezing breath,
 Should sometimes shut it out from memory
 So as to play quite prettily with death,
 And turn an easy epitaph?



can hear a voice whisper-
ing in my brain:
'Why this is the old
futility again!
Criminal! day by day
Your own life is ebbing
swiftly away.

And what have you done with it,
Except to become a maudlin hypocrite?'

Yes, I know, I know;

One should not think of death or the dead
overmuch; but one's mind's made so
That at certain times the roads of thought
all lead to death,

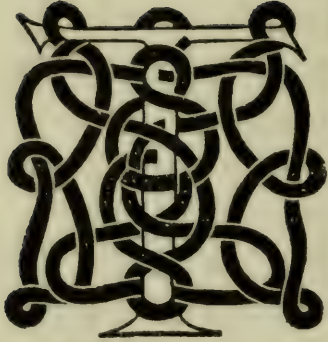
And false reasoning clouds one's soul as a
window with breath

Is clouded in winter's air,

And all the faith one may have

Lies useless and dead as a body in the grave.

THE SHIP



HERE was no song nor
shout of joy
Nor beam of moon or sun,
When she came back from
the voyage
Long ago begun;
But twilight on the waters
Was quiet and grey,
And she glided steady, steady and pensive,
Over the open bay.

Her sails were brown and ragged,
And her crew hollow-eyed,
But their silent lips spoke content
And their shoulders pride;
Though she had no captives on her deck,
And in her hold
There were no heaps of corn or timber
Or silks or gold.

THE MARCH



heard a voice that cried, "make
way for those who died!"

And all the coloured crowd
like ghosts at morning fled;
And down the waiting road,
rank after rank there strode,
In mute and measured march
a hundred thousand dead.

A hundred thousand dead, with firm and noise-
less tread,

All shadowy-grey yet solid, with faces grey
and ghastr,

And by the house they went, and all their
brows were bent

Straight forward; and they passed, and passed,
and passed, and passed.

But O there came a place, and O there came
a face,

That clenched my heart to see it, and sudden
turned my way;

And in the Face that turned I saw two eyes
that burned,

Never-forgotten eyes, and they had things to
say.

Like desolate stars they shone one moment,
and were gone,
And I sank down and put my arms across
my head,
And felt them moving past, nor looked to see
the last,
In steady silent march, our hundred thousand
dead.

FAITH



WHEN I seek truth, do I seek
truth
Only that I may things de-
note,
And, rich by striving, deck my
youth
As with a vain unusual coat?

Or seek I truth for other ends:

That she in other hearts may stir,
That even my most familiar friends
May turn from me to look on her?

So I this day myself was asking;
Out of the window skies were blue
And Thames was in the sunlight basking;
My thoughts coiled inwards like a screw.

I watched them anxious for a while;
Then quietly, as I did watch,
Spread in my soul a sudden smile:
I knew that no firm thing they'd catch.

And I remembered if I leapt
Upon the bosom of the wind
It would sustain me; question slept;
I felt that I had almost sinned.

A FRESH MORNING



NOW am I a tin whistle
Through which God blows,
And I wish to God I were a
trumpet
—But why, God only knows.

INTERIOR

I and myself swore enmity. Alack,
Myself has tied my hands behind my back.
Yielding, I know there's no excuse in them—
I was accomplice to the stratagem.

ODE: IN A RESTAURANT



N this dense hall of green
and gold,
Mirrors and lights and
steam, there sit
Two hundred munching
men;
While several score of

others flit

Like scurrying beetles over a fen,
With plates in fanlike spread; or fold
Napkins, or jerk the corks from bottles,
Ministers to greedy throttles.

Some make noises while they eat,
Pick their teeth or shuffle their feet,
Wipe their noses 'neath eyes that range
Or frown whilst waiting for their change.
Gobble, gobble, toil and trouble.

Soul! this life is very strange,
And circumstances very foul
Attend the belly's stormy howl.

How horrible this noise! this air how thick!

It is disgusting . . . I feel sick . . .

Loosely I prod the table with a fork,

My mind gapes, dizzies, ceases to work . . .

.

The weak unsatisfied strain
Of a band in another room

Through this dull complex din
 Comes winding thin and sharp!
 The gnat-like mourning of the violin,
 The faint strings of the harp.
 The sounds pierce in and die again,
 Like keen-drawn threads of ink dropped into
 a glass
 Of water, which curl and relax and soften
 and pass.
 Briefly the music hovers in unstable poise,
 Then melts away, drowned in the heavy sea
 of noise.
 And I, I am now emasculate.
 All my forces dissipate;
 Conquered by matter utterly,
 Moving not, willing not, I lie,
 Like a man whom timbers pin
 When the roof of a mine falls in.



ALT! . . . as a cloud con-
 denses
 I press my mind, recover
 Dominion of my senses.
 With newly flowing blood
 I lift, and now float over
 The restaurant's expanses
 Like a draggled sea-gull over dreary flats of
 mud.

An effort . . . ah . . . I urge and push,
And now with greater strength I flush,
The hall is full of my pinions' rush;
No drooping now, the place is mine,
Beating the walls with shattering wings,
Over the herd my spirit swings,
In triumph shouts "Aha, you swine!
Grovel before your lord divine!
I, only I, am real here! . . ."

Through the uncertain firmament,
Still bestial in their dull content.

The despicable phantoms leer . . .

Hogs! even now in my right hand
I hold at my will the thunderbolts

Measured not in mortal volts,
Would crash you to annihilation!

Lit with a new illumination,

What need I of ears and eyes
Of flesh? Imperious I will rise,
Dominate you as a god

Who only does not trouble to wield the rod
Of death, or kick your weak spheroid
Like a football through the void!

Ha! was it but a dream?

And did it merely seem?

Ha! not yet free of your cage,

Soul, spite of all your rage?
Come now, this foe engage!
With explosion of your might
Oh heave, oh leap and flash up, soul,
Like a stabbing scream in the night!
Hurl aside this useless bowl
Of a body . . .

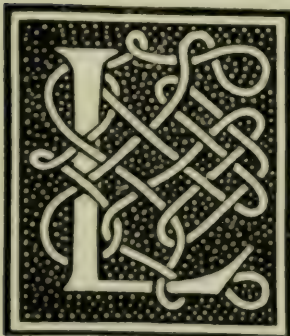
But there comes a shock

A soft, tremendous shock
Of contact with the body; I lose all power,
And fall back, back, like a solitary rower
Whose prow that debonair the waves did
ride
Is suddenly hurled back by an iron tide.
O sadness, sadness, feel the returning pain
Of touch with unescapable mortal things
again!

The cloth is linen, the floor is wood,
My plate holds cheese, my tumbler toddy;
I cannot get free of the body,
And no man ever could.

Self! do not lose your hold on life,
Nor coward seek to shrink the strife
Of body and spirit; even now
(Not for the first time), even now
Clear in your ears has rung the message

That tense abstraction is the passage
To nervelessness and living death.
Never forget while you draw breath
That all the hammers of will can never
Your chained soul from matter sever;
And though it be confused and mixed,
This is the world in which you're fixed.
Never despise the things that are.
Set your teeth upon the grit.
Though your heart like a motor beat,
Hold fast this earthly star,
The whole of it, the whole of it.



LOOK on this crowd
now, calm now, look.
Remember now that
each one drew
Woman's milk (which
you partook)
And year by year in
wonder grew.

Scorn not them, nor scorn not their feasts
(Which you partake) nor call them beasts.
These be children of one Power
With you, nor higher you nor lower.
They also hear the harp and fiddle,
And sometimes quail before the riddle.

They also have hot blood, quick thought,
And try to do the things they ought,
They also have hearts that ache when
 stung,
And sigh for days when they were young,
And curse their wills because they falter,
And know that they will never alter.
See these men in a world of men.
Material bodies?—yes, what then?
These coarse trunks that here you see
Judge them not, lest judged you be,
Bow not to the moment's curse,
Nor make four walls a universe.
Think of these bodies here assembled,
Whence they have come, where they
 have trembled
With the strange force that fills us all,
Men and beasts both great and small.
Here within this fleeting home
Two hundred men have this day come;
Here collected for one day,
Each shall go his separate way.
Self, you can imagine nought
Of all the battles they have fought,
All the labours they have done,
All the journeys they have run.
O, they have come from all the world,
Borne by invisible currents, swirled

Like leaves into this vortex here
Flying, or like the spirits drear
Windborne and frail, whom Dante saw,
Who yet obeyed some hidden law.

Is it not miraculous
That they should here be gathered thus,
All to be spread before your view,
Who are strange to them as they to you?
Soul, how can you sustain without a sob,
The lightest thought of this titanic throb
Of earthly life, that swells and breaks
Into leaping scattering waves of fire,
Into tameless tempests of effort and storms of
desire

That eternally makes
The confused glittering armies of humankind,
To their own heroism blind,
Swarm over the earth to build, to dig, and to
till,
To mould and compel land and sea to their
will . . .

Whence we are here eating . . .

Standing here as on a high hill,
Strain, my imagination, strain forth to embrace
The energies that labour for this place,
This place, this instant. Beyond your island's
verge,

Listen, and hear the roaring impulsive surge,
The clamour of voices, the blasting of powder,
the clanging of steel,
The thunder of hammers, the rattle of oars . . .
For this one meal
Ten thousand Indian hamlets stored their
yields,
Manchurian peasants sweltered in their
fields,
And Greeks drove carts to Patras, and lone
men
Saw burning summer come and go again
And huddled from the winds of winter on
The fertile deserts of Saskatchewan.
To fabricate these things have been march-
ings and slaughters,
The sun has toiled and the moon has moved
the waters,
Cities have laboured, and crowded plains, and
deep in the earth
Men have plunged unafraid with ardour to
wrench the worth
Of sweating dim-lit caverns, and paths have
been hewn
Through forests where for uncounted years
nor sun nor moon
Have penetrated, men have driven straight
shining rails

Through the dense bowels of mountains, and
climbed their frozen tops, and wrinkled
sailors have shouted at shouting gales
In the huge Pacific, and battled around the
Horn

And gasping, coasted to Rio, and turning to-
wards the morn,

Fought over the wastes to Spain, and battered
and worn,

Sailed up the channel, and on into the Nore
To the city of masts and the smoky familiar
shore.

So, so of every substance you see around

Might a tale be unwound

Of perils passed, of adventurous journeys made

In man's undying and stupendous crusade.

This flower of man's energies Trade

Brought hither to hand and lip

By waggon, train or ship,

Each atom that we eat. . . .

Stare at the wine, stare at the meat.

The mutton which these platters fills

Grazed upon a thousand hills;

This bread so square and white and dry

Once was corn that sang to the sky;

And all these spruce, obedient wines

Flowed from the vatted fruit of vines

That trailed, a bright maternal host,

The warm Mediterranean coast,
Or spread their Bacchic mantle on
That Iberian Helicon
Where the slopes of Portugal
Crown the Atlantic's eastern wall.



mighty energy, never-
failing flame!

O patient toils and jour-
neys in the name

Of Trade! No journey
ever was the same

As another, nor ever came

again one task;

And each man's face is an ever-changing mask.

From the minutest cell to the lordliest star

All things are unique, though all of their kin-
dred are.

And though all things exist for ever, all life
is change,

And the oldest passions come to each heart
in a garment strange.

Though life be as brief as a flower and the
body but dust,

Man walks the earth holding both body and
spirit in trust;

And the various glories of sense are spread for
his delight,

New pageants glow in the sunset, new stars
are born in the night,
And clouds come every day, and never a shape
recurs,
And the grass grows every year, yet never the
same blade stirs
Another spring, and no delving man breaks
again the self-same clod
As he did last year though he stand once more
where last year he trod.
O wonderful procession fore-ordained by God!
Wonderful in unity, wonderful in diversity.
Contemplate it, soul, and see
How the material universe moves and strives
with anguish and glee!

I was born for that reason,
With muscles, heart and eyes,
To watch each following season,
To work and to be wise;
Not body and mind to tether
To unseen things alone,
But to traverse together
The known and the unknown.
My muscles were not welded
To waste away in sleep,
My bones were never builded
To throw upon a heap.

“Man worships God in action,”
Senses and reason call,
“And thought is putrefaction,
If thought is all in all!”



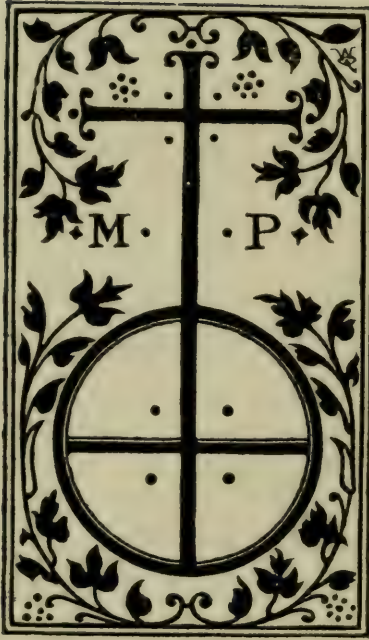
OST of the guests are
gone; look over there,
Against a pillar leans with
absent air
A tall, dark, pallid waiter.
There he stands
Limply, with vacant eyes
and listless hands.

He dreams of some small Tyrolean town,
A church, a bridge, a stream that rushes
down. . . .

A frustrate, hankering man, this one short time
Unconscious he into my gaze did climb;
He sinks again, again he is but one
Of many myriads underneath the sun,
Now faint, now vivid. . . . How puzzling is
it all!

For now again, in spite of all,
The lights, the chairs, the diners, and the hall
Lost their opacity.

Fool! exert your will,
Finish your whisky up, and pay your bill.



H1A 4635

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

H&SS
A
4635

UTL AT DOWNSVIEW



D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 10 09 04 02 015 6